Low cost power and Mega Power Policy

858. SHRIMATI JAMANA DEVI BARUPAL:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is considering to have low cost power in the country and has prepared a package of measures in this regard;

(b) whether Government has also decided to introduce major changes in Mega Power Policy;

(c) if so, the details of low cost power packages and changes in Mega Power Policy; and

(d) if so, to what extent introduction of measures/changes in mega power and low cost power will be helpful to the country?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.M. SAYEED): (a) Various reform measures initiated by the Government of India as well as policy initiatives like the Mega Power Policy are aimed at ensuring availability of quality power at competitive rates. The focus of power sector reforms is on metering of all consumers, energy audit, improvement of billing and collection efficiency, reduction of technical and commercial losses, reduction and elimination of theft of power, constitution and operationalisation of State Electricity Regulatory Commission, achievement of commercial viability in a time bound manner.

(b) and (c) The mega power policy announced in 1995 has been reviewed and revised from time to time considering the experience gained in its implementation and the needs of the power sector. The policy was first revised in November, 1998 and provided for zero customs duty for import of capital equipment for 19 identified inter-state mega power projects in the Public as well as Private Sector. In addition, the income-tax holiday had been continued with the provision that the tax holiday period of 10 years can be claimed by a promoter in any block of 10 years within the first 15 years. The revised policy also provided for deemed export benefits as per the EXIM policy to domestic bidders for the mega power projects.

As per the latest amendment to the Customs Notification issued in March, 2003, the customs duty waiver has been extended to all inter-state projects which fulfill the basic criteria of minimum capacity of 1000 MW for thermal and 500 MW for hydel projects subject to certification by the Ministry of Power.

The Mega Power Policy also seeks to encourage reforms by stipulating a condition that the cheaper power from mega projects will be available to those States which have initiated reforms.

(d) All these initiatives will contribute towards achieving the ultimate goal of 'Power for all by 2012'.

Revision of Guidelines for the Hariyali and Swajaldhara Schemes

859. SHRI LALITBHAI MEHTA: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry is considering to revise guidelines for 'Hariyali' and 'Swajaldhara' schemes so as to enable reputed NGOs to participate in the schemes;

(b) if so, by when the revised guidelines are to be framed and shall come into force;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the experience of the Ministry, while implementing Sector Reform Programme through NGOs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT(SHRI A. NARENDRA): (a) to (c) The task of revision of guidelines for any rural development programme is a continuous process and is taken up from time to time as dictated by the field realities. Accordingly, the Guidelines for Watershed Development that became operational with effect from 1.4.1995 were revised in August, 2001. Subsequently, the guidelines were again revised and renamed as Guidelines for Hariyali in April, 2003 to empower the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in all aspects of watershed development activities. These Guidelines and those of Swajaldhara Scheme, provide scope for reputed NGOs to participate in the implementation of the schemes in activities like community mobilization, capacity building etc.

(d) In the implementation of Sector Reform Pilot Projects, NGOs are expected to play the role envisaged in the Swajaldhara Guidelines Depending on the care taken by the project authorities in the selection of NGOs, the performance of the NGOs has been varied from project to project.